

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Working Documents

1981-1982

9 October 1981

DOCUMENT 1-567/81

Report

drawn up on behalf of the Committee on Agriculture

on the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council (Doc. 1-437/81) for a Decision concerning the modification of the Agreement, establishing fishing arrangements between the European Economic Community and the Kingdom of Norway for 1981

Rapporteur: Mr James PROVAN

By letter of 10 August 1981, the Council of the European Communities requested the European Parliament, pursuant to Article 43 of the EEC Treaty, to deliver an opinion on the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council for a decision concerning the modification of the Agreement, establishing fishing arrangements between the European Economic Community and the Kingdom of Norway for 1981.

On 20 August 1981, the President of the European Parliament referred this proposal to the Committee on Agriculture as the committee responsible.

The Committee on Agriculture appointed Mr Provan rapporteur on 1 October 1981.

The Committee considered these proposals at its meeting of 2 October 1981.

At the same meeting the Committee unanimously adopted the motion for a resolution and the explanatory statement.

Present: Sir Henry Plumb, chairman; Mr Früh, vice-chairman; Mr Provan, rapporteur; Mr Battersby, Mr Blaney (deputizing for Mr Skovmand), Mr Davern, Mr Eyraud, Mr Gatto, Mr Hord, Mr de Keersmaecker (deputizing for Mr Helms), Mr Nielsen, Mrs Pery (deputizing for Mr Sutra) and Mr Pranchère.

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The Committee on Agriculture hereby submits to the European Parliament the following motion for a resolution, together with explanatory statement:

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

embodying the opinion of the European Parliament on the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council for a decision concerning the modification of the Agreement, establishing fishing arrangements between the European Economic Community and the Kingdom of Norway for 1981

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the proposals from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council (COM(81) 436 final),¹
 - having been consulted by the Council pursuant to Article 43 of the Treaty (Doc. 1-437/81),
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Agriculture (Doc. 1-567/81),
 - having regard to the Agreement establishing fishing arrangements between the EC and Norway,
 - whereas the ICES's recommendations on total allowable catches for certain North Sea stocks have been revised,
1. Approves the Commission's proposals subject to the following observations;
 2. Points out that Community fishermen have recently been subjected to unreasonable harassment by Norwegian authorities while seeking to fish grounds allocated under the EC-Norwegian Fisheries Agreement, with the result that those Community fishermen have been obliged to discontinue their operations; notes at the same time that Norwegian fishermen have been able to continue fishing unhindered in Community waters;
 3. Emphasises that Norwegian fishermen enjoy considerable commercial advantages in being able to sell their fish on the Community market at reduced tariff rates;
 4. Calls upon the Commission:
 - (a) to act immediately and energetically to ensure that Community fishermen are able to continue fishing freely and without harassment in agreed grounds in Norwegian waters;
 - (b) to report to the European Parliament on whether the fisheries Agreement with Norway is worth quota and commercial concessions granted by the Community.

¹ OJ No. C 221, 2.9.1981, p.6

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

1. Following the recommendations of the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES), the Community and Norway concluded an agreement on an increase in TAC's for cod and haddock and on the allocation thereof. They also agreed on the allocation to Norway of a herring fishing quota of 10,000 tons off the west coast of Scotland.

The delegations agreed in addition on a North Sea herring TAC, although they were unable to decide whether herring in the North Sea should be regarded as a single stock or as several stocks.

In view of the 1981 fishing pattern Norway is not requesting a quota for North Sea herring this year. However, this is without prejudice to future agreements.

2. This proposal to adjust the quotas under the Agreement raises no particular problems since it follows from principles already agreed.

3. However, it has become increasingly evident that the manner in which Norway implements the Agreement must lead the Community to examine whether it is worthwhile to continue with it in the future. Many Community fishermen while engaged in fishing for quotas laid down in the Agreement have been subjected to continuous harassment by Norwegian authorities with the result that they have abandoned the attempt to fish in Norwegian waters. Certain vessels have returned virtually empty which results in very serious financial losses given the distances it requires for many Community fishermen to reach Norwegian waters.

The situation is unlikely to improve unless the Commission takes energetic action. The Norwegian Government announced on September 24, 1981 that in view of alleged overfishing by Community fishermen, Norway no longer considered itself bound by the Agreement and would take into account when negotiating for 1982 what Norway considered as the Community disregard of the 1981 Agreement.

4. It should also be pointed out that Norway enjoys considerable commercial advantages for the export of its fisheries products on the Community market, a 3% tariff, for example, for the majority of frozen fillets as opposed to the normal 15%.¹ As the table below shows, the Norwegian exports of fish to the Community are considerable.

5. There is at present no direct relationship between the commercial advantages granted to Norway and access by Community fishermen to Norwegian waters. This results partly from a division of responsibility in the Commission and a lack of proper coordination. The Parliament has already pointed out the resulting disadvantages in the case of the Canadian Agreement.

¹ To be reduced progressively to approximately 12% following GATT negotiations.

6. Given the present difficulties of the Agreement and the market problems of Community fishermen which have been aggravated by third country imports, the Commission should report on the future of the Norwegian Agreement, the balance of advantage and disadvantage, so that the Parliament and Council can deliberate as to whether the Agreement should be continued in the future.

Norway - Exports of major fishery products to Member States in 1980 (tonnes)

Fresh, chilled or frozen
(excluding fillets)

United Kingdom	8,414
Denmark	8,216
Germany	9,522
France	4,784

Frozen fillets

United Kingdom	30,722
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Dried or salted

Italy	15,500
France	8,551

Fish and shellfish
preparations

United Kingdom	4,227
France	3,941

